



Grounds Management Association

The Grounds Management Association (GMA) is the leading professional organisation for grounds management. They are a not-for-profit and provide online and face-to-face industry-specific training and learning courses, sports turf-specific qualifications and advisory services for pitch and turf care.

They first achieved their **matrix** Standard accreditation in 2017 and are now on track to achieve their re-accreditation in 2023. We were fortunate to discuss their **matrix** Standard journey with Dan Prest, Head of Technical and Learning, Nathan Woodford-Rott, Senior Marketing Executive, and Chris Gray, Learning and Programme Architect. We chatted about their Annual Continuous Improvement Check (CIC) that took place in October 2022, how they knew they were maintaining the right level of performance and what's making them strive for their re-accreditation later this year.

What would you recommend and suggest for someone wanting to achieve a matrix Standard accreditation?

“As in many organisations, improving customer satisfaction was the biggest driver for our matrix Standard journey. We believe it is vital to consider our customers’ perspectives and establish why they would want to choose us. The matrix Standard has increased customer satisfaction and enabled us to grow and become more sustainable.

The matrix Standard is an excellent framework to consider how to develop information, advice, and guidance services. There is always something to improve on and the matrix Standard allowed us to identify exactly where to begin.”

GMA on the matrix Standard.

Initially, the Grounds Management Association were required to have a quality framework to achieve funding purposes, which is how they originally came across the **matrix** Standard in 2016. Subsequently, they saw tremendous improvement from acquiring their accreditation; 86.6% of learners saw good to significant improvements in their soft skills and learning. It, therefore, wasn't hard for them to decide to maintain the Standard and strive for their reaccreditation in 2023.

How did you find the Standard?

“Personally, we felt that an ample amount of information was provided which we understood with ease. The assessor was also there for us throughout the entire process. They are truly knowledgeable and offered solutions to all the queries and questions that we had”.

Applying for the Reaccreditation.

It was the assessor's feedback that instilled in GMA that it was worthwhile and that they were on track to maintain their accreditation:

*“The positive feedback from the assessor made us realise how valuable the **matrix** Standard accreditation had been for our organisation's growth. Knowing the aspects that had improved from our initial accreditation and seeing first-hand the benefits of having a quality standard, it was relevant for us to explore the re-accreditation. We also gained the confidence from our annual continuous improvement check (CIC) that we are on track to achieve the re-accreditation.”*

Being Assessed

GMA greatly appreciated having an assessor on board their reaccreditation journey. They described their relationship with the assessor as very positive, informative, and supportive. The assessor's feedback was the element that stood out the most, allowing

GMA to clearly identify the opportunities to improve and how they should go about doing so, providing them with a range of ideas and actions to consider.

One aspect that the assessor had particularly noted, was focusing on soft skills. The evaluation forms were trying to provide information for the learner's support. The assessor suggested simplifying forms to make them clearer and easier to fill out. These changes gained a positive response from the learners, the main focus shifted from stand-alone soft skills to 5 embedded soft skills. This resulted in 80% of learners demonstrating positive improvements within their evaluation.

What changes have you achieved through matrix accreditation?

"It has also helped our internal staff's soft skills also improve. This was seen in our communications. As we are industry specific, we tend to use a lot of technical languages which can exclude those who are not used to it. To widen our market, we have included more of an inclusive tone, allowing our messages to have a wider reach."

Since the matrix Standard accreditation, GMA has continually improved their online learning courses.

This led to a stronger online course structure. Throughout Covid in 2020 this provided them with a viable business. This developed experience positioned GMA as a leading online training deliverer with increased numbers of learners who responded highly to the upgraded learning system. Their evaluations allowed GMA to feel confident about their organisation's development and the changes they have made.

With the **matrix** Standard in place, GMA themselves are being approached by the types of customers they had initially had to target market. It is evident that there are clear benefits to acquiring the **matrix** Standard accreditation and business growth. From using the **matrix** Standard logo there is a strong alignment of desirability and a message of quality you can trust of.

What is next for the future for GMA?

The main focus now is to continue to grow the soft skills of their learners in terms of their employability, training the skill sets that will be most valuable to future employers and enabling them to clearly demonstrate these skills.

For GMA knowing that their learners have sought employment after attending their courses allows them to be made aware of the progress and differences their training courses have made in their customers' lives.

We'd like to thank **Dan Prest, Head of Technical and Learning, Nathan Woodford-Rott, Senior Marketing Executive,** and **Chris Gray, Learning and Programme Architect**, for providing us with their **matrix** Standard journey. It was interesting to see why an organisation would wish to achieve re-accreditation and how the **matrix** Standard provides a valuable service to an organisation. It was good to hear GMA is on track for their re-accreditation.

Thanks to the GMA team for #makingIAGbetter.

